

Gift of the President

Methodist Prayers.

ADDRESS

BY

DR. NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

President of Columbia University in the City of New York

TO THE MEMBERS OF

THE UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA

AT

FOUNDERS' DAY CELEBRATION

HELD

SATURDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 27, 1915

ADDRESS

BY

DR. NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

Mr. President and Members of The Union League:

Your cordial reception makes me feel very much at home. These are stirring times in which we live, and it is no small privilege for an American to have the opportunity of facing such a company of fellow Americans, or for a convinced and life-long Republican to have the privilege of facing this company of Republicans. [Applause.]

It was my lot to be born after the Civil War had begun and for me the name, the face and the repute of Abraham Lincoln belong not to memory but to imagination. Yet I was brought up under the very shadow of his name, of his fame and of his work. The events and circumstances to which such effective allusion has been made by your President were among the earliest lessons that it was my fortune to learn. It seemed to me then, and it seems to me now, that Abraham Lincoln left to every American born after him a legacy in the form of a direct injunction to love his country,

to study its needs, to make himself familiar with its policies and its problems, and to labor with those like-minded with himself for the advancement of all of these. Therefore, I make no excuse to any one for having been actively engaged in the work of politics since I was old enough, or even before I was old enough to be permitted by law to do so. [Applause.]

The era of Lincoln, of the Civil War, and of nation-building—that great classic era in the history of the western world and of all mankind—is closed. The problems that confronted the founders and the builders of our nation are still our problems, but they are presented to us in a different form. We are no longer a young people, but a comparatively old and well-established one. We are, thank God, a united people. We have solved, let us hope forever and finally, the problem of building a single great nation out of a group of federated states with diverse populations, with conflicting economic needs and desires, and we have opened our arms to the whole wide world that it may enter in and share with us and with our children the shelter and the protection of this noble structure. When so much has been done we find ourselves confronted with the problems of an older people and of a better-established civilization. It is no longer necessary for us to find men of energy and ambition to explore a continent, to bridge rivers, to fell forests or to build railways across the desert; those are the problems of a new people and we solved those problems in the generation that followed 1850 and

1860. Then came the problems incident to a more concentrated political and economic life—the problems of capital and labor, the problems of the growth of great corporate wealth, of the organization of business and of the development of public utilities, as well as the relation of all these to government, both state and national. During all this second period, which was shorter than the first, very intense and tremendously important, abounding in problems that touched the interests and convictions of every citizen, we were still a self-centered people. We had foreign relations, but they were of minor importance. They occupied the attention of the President, of the Department of State and of the Senate, but beyond that they hardly existed for the great mass of our American population. But now, in a twinkling of an eye, the outlook that confronts America has changed and we are about to enter, perhaps it would be correct to say we have already entered, upon a new and third period of our political development and of our intellectual and moral preoccupation. We are now confronted with the fact, borne in upon us in a thousand ways, that steam, electricity, the use of the air, the development of modern industry and finance, have conspired to destroy distance and to eliminate time, and that these have bound the whole world together in a new and hitherto unsuspected sort of interdependence. Out of that interdependence of the nations, an interdependence of our nation with other nations of the world, comes the new series of problems for the consideration and the solution

of which this nation must insistently and thoughtfully prepare.

The old world order changed when the sun set on Friday, July 31, 1914. The old international order passed away as suddenly, as unexpectedly and as completely as if it had been wiped out by a gigantic flood, by a great tempest, or by a volcanic eruption. The old world order died with the setting of that day's sun and a new world order is being born while I speak, with birth pangs so terrible that it seems almost incredible that life could come out of such fearful suffering and such overwhelming sorrow.

What has America to do with it all? All these terrible clashings and crashings are on the other side of the world, from which we are separated by a great ocean. How do these matters affect us, secure in our protection across three thousand miles of sea, living under other political institutions and under the dominance of other political ideas and with different economic and social interests? Ask the cotton grower in the South. Ask the copper miner in the far Southwest. Ask the lumberman on Puget Sound. Ask the banker in Philadelphia, in New York, in Boston or in Chicago. Ask any one of these whether the European war affects him and how, and get his answer. Ask the student of civil and political liberty. Ask the trained liberal who believes in human rights, in the free development of small nations, in the sanctity of international obligations, and in the supremacy of international law. Ask any one of these whether

he knows that there is a war on the other side of the world and whether it affects him and his interests and get his answer.

Mr. President, the present state of the law is precisely what Senator Knox described it to be just now, but I believe that we must amend that law, or so reinterpret it as properly and fully to meet new and changed conditions. [Applause.]

In this new outlook that confronts us we are not called upon, as I see it, to depart in principle or in practice from sound American policy, but we are called upon I think to consider whether, as the keeper of the conscience of democracy, as the most powerful exponents of political and civil liberty on the globe, we are not in some sense our brothers' keepers, and whether we have not some political and moral contribution to make to a stricken and distracted and overturned world. [Applause.] I would not have the people of these United States forget the injunction of Washington. I would not have them depart from the path of established policy that has been trodden so long and on the whole so wisely. I would not have them make an alliance, entangling or otherwise, with any single nation or any group of nations on the globe. But I would have them enter into such relations of intimacy and influence with every nation that the spirit and convictions which animate and permeate the American people might be made a contribution to the world's civilization when this war ends. [Applause.] I would endeavor to show to Europe how clear across the sea we have solved

and are solving some problems that are in kind their problems. I would try to show to Europe that whatever may be the difficulties and the conflicts which grow out of differences of race and of creed and of language, those difficulties are only increased by political repression, while they are decreased by an extension of civil and political liberty. [Applause.] I would try to show that on the whole, and despite the dangers and difficulties and the many and obvious embarrassments which accompany it, a national policy of freedom, of hospitality and of equal opportunity solves more problems than it leaves unsolved, and that on the whole it solves more political problems than any other alternative policy that has yet been presented for the government of men. [Applause.] I would not interfere for a moment with the internal concerns of any European nation or with their just ambitions, their alliances and their rivalries, but at a time like this I would not throw away the lesson of a hundred and twenty-five years of life and government under the Constitution of the United States. [Applause.] I would make a world figure of Washington. I would make world figures of Hamilton and Jefferson, of Marshall and Webster. I would make a world figure of Abraham Lincoln. I would make their names, their faces, their public acts and the great tendencies and institutions that they organized and represented the property of the whole civilized world for the benefit of all mankind. For this or for any such policy of international influence this nation must prepare.

There is much talk among us of preparedness and justly enough; for while we fix our eyes on the stars we must keep our feet on the firm earth. [Applause.] We must deal not with facts as we would like them to be, but with facts as they are. [Applause.] But there is an aspect of this important question that has hardly been touched, and I have not yet seen it even adverted to by any spokesman of the present administration. That question is this: What is to be the object of your preparedness? What are to be the policies that you are going to teach, to defend and to extend over the earth? What are to be the ideals that you are going to hold up before yourselves and then before the other nations of the earth? Armies and navies are not ends; they are means. But means to what end? For what are we going to prepare? Are we going to prepare to make this nation first a model nation home and then a model nation abroad? If we are going to do this then we have a policy. If we are not going to do this then we have no policy but only a proposal for expenditure. [Applause.]

Our American ideals are not vague or uncertain. They have been stated for us in language that the whole world can read, in words that will remain forever familiar where the history of freedom is read and studied. They have been written for us particularly in four great historic documents. You will find them in the opening paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence. You will find them in the preamble to the Constitution of the United States. You will find them in Washington's fare-

well address to the American people. You will find them put with all the terseness of classic literature in the immortal address of Abraham Lincoln on the battlefield of Gettysburg over yonder. Those great documents have stated for us the aims, the ideals and the purposes of this government, as well as the aims, the ideals and the purposes of the people in founding and in maintaining this government. Mr. President, it is for a fuller comprehension of those aims, those ideals and those purposes, for a more complete carrying out of them at home, and for a more effective teaching of them abroad that we must prepare. We must prepare under the leadership of those who, by experience, by training, by discipline and by conviction are able to help us set our feet in these new paths. For it is as true today as it was when the prophet first said it, that where there is no vision the people perish. [Applause.]

One great lesson of the war in Europe is that the old international order is a failure; that the order of alliances and ententes, of secret understandings and dynastic arrangements has broken down, and that the international policies of a Palmerston, of a Disraeli, or of a Bismarck, splendid as they were in their own day have been outgrown and cast aside forever. The world is ready for a step forward. It is ready for a step forward along the path which the American people have already trod, and which this people knows well. It is ready for a step along the path of federation and for a new application of the federative principle which

has made this nation one. This problem is in some form soon to be worked out, for its solution, in whole or in part, will be the next great step to be taken in the world's international policies. To aid in this no nation can possibly make larger contribution than our own. Yes, gentlemen, surely the outlook before us has changed!

Since Mr. Joseph Chamberlain returned to England after his famous trip to South Africa, he told the English people that the time had come when they must learn to think imperially. So it may now be said that the time has come when the American people must learn to think internationally. We must learn to think in terms of our relations with the whole world, and we must learn to think of other peoples than ourselves with such sympathy, with such kindness and with such understanding as will enable us to appreciate the point of view, the opinions and the institutions of those whose experiences have been different from our own. I like to think that the hand of fate has brought to us out of this terrible war a new and unexpected call to achievement; first at home in putting our own house in order, and next abroad in teaching the peoples of the world a lesson that the founders and the fathers have taught us. Mr. Bryce, than whom we have no better or wiser friend, told us years ago that withal we must learn to cultivate a becoming modesty. He pointed out to us that there was one peculiar difficulty in government by public opinion, and that is that public opinion tends to be very sure of itself, to be very proud

of its findings and decisions, and to be very certain that its judgment, however incidental or however temporary, is entirely correct. The only way in which we can ensure ourselves against undue self-esteem, which would be our undoing at home, and which would add to our undoing abroad, is by perpetual and persistent reexamination of our own principles, our own aims, our own purposes and by conferring and consulting together as to how best we can advance this nation in paths of justice and of liberty.

We have great economic problems that are in part internal and that are in part international. There are signs that this new international era of which I speak is going to help us to solve some of our internal economic problems. There are some gentlemen of eminence who are not quite so sure of their formulas as they were three years ago. Some gentlemen have discovered that for them at least the revival of business, quickly stimulated by this war, was a blessing not very much disguised. [Laughter.] They have discovered that they have presented us with fiscal legislation which, if left to itself in ordinary times, would have made it even more necessary than appears to be the case at present to find a method by which to transfer liabilities to the column of assets in the monthly statement of the Treasurer of the United States. [Laughter and applause.] It may be that this process of education is not going to expend itself entirely on foreign peoples. It may prove to be the case that there are good learners and good

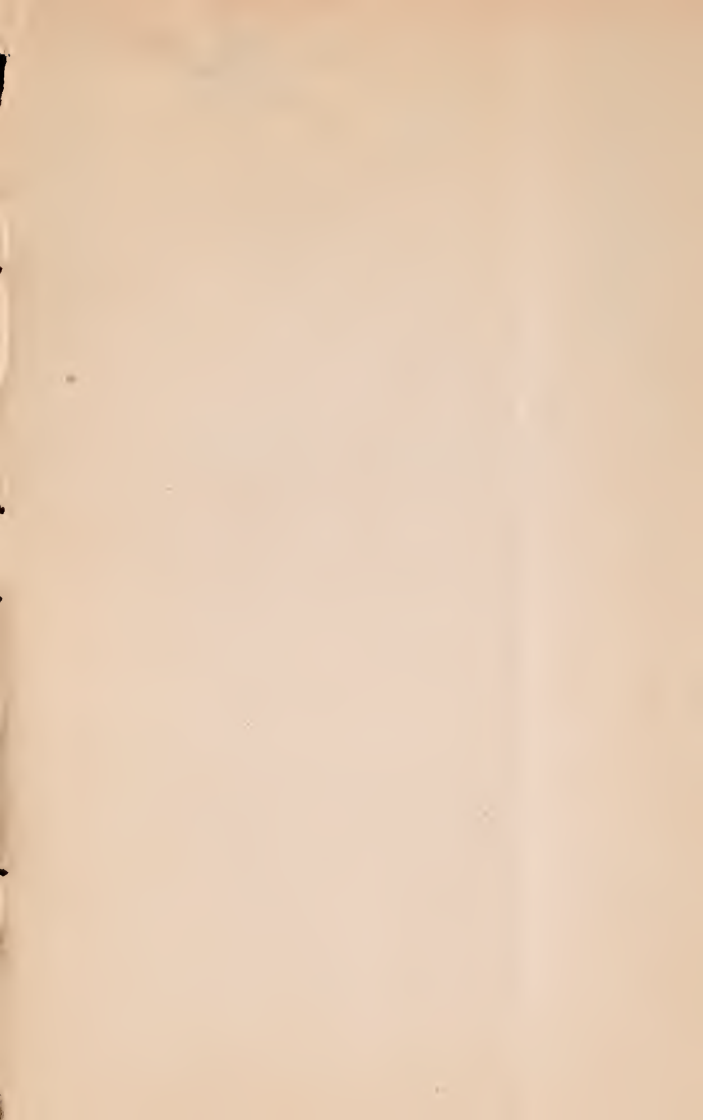
pupils here at home, and that as a people we shall see before very long that the fundamental essentials of sound economic policy have not been met by the legislation of the past three years. [Applause.]

We cannot depend upon the heightened temperature of war fever to keep us warm forever. There will come a time when our business temperature will fall to normal or below unless there be nutriment upon which to keep our body-politic warm and in good health.

We have got to face under these new conditions the world old problem of how to provide justly for equal opportunity, and how to provide an economic basis for individual existence in order that men may be able to live at all. It is hardly worth while to preach ideals of government to a starving man. We must provide, first, wisely, justly and securely for our internal economic organization, in order that we may be able to do these new international deeds of which I speak. In other words, while our whole problem, national and international, is bound up together it becomes immensely larger and immensely more important than it has ever been before, because we have now discovered these innumerable points of contact with other nations and we see the meaning and significance on one side of the world of some public act or economic policy that has its origin on the other. This is all a part of the task that I call learning to think internationally. It will affect our domestic problems and our domestic policies, as well as our foreign problems and our foreign policies.

Unless I mistake the signs of the times, this nation is crying out for leadership. It is crying out for a voice that will give expression to its political conviction and to its moral purpose in tones that every American will understand. [Prolonged applause.] Unless I mistake the signs of the times, the American people would like a leadership whose ear is not continually fastened to the ground. We wish, we need, we long for a determined, clear and sympathetic voice that will do for our day and generation what Abraham Lincoln did for his. [Applause.] A voice that will look down into the hearts of the plain people, that will know the conditions that influence their lives, that will understand the motives that guide their action, that will sympathize with their ambitions, with their difficulties and with their failures, and that will call them up to the high places of the earth as did those voices that called our fathers up to their great achievement. Give us leadership. Give us a mind to seek, a heart to feel and a voice to proclaim what the American people of this day and this generation aspire to do at home and abroad. [Prolonged applause.]

*The above is all
American hat over —
— Amen —*



Lest We Forget.

When gallant sons of liberty were
struggling for the right
Against the hordes on Southern soil
arrayed in treacherous might,
When whistling whips and clanking
chains, enmeshed four million slaves,
And battlefields were thickly strewn
with loyal, true and brave;
When smoke clouds from the cannon's
mouth, obscured the light of day —
I ask you, fellow countrymen:
What role did England play?

'Twas England's aid to treason that
prolonged the war for years
'T was England's stand that drenched
this Land in floods of blood and
tears;
'T was England that equipped the ships
that preyed on union trade,
And loyal sailors sleep in the deep, in
in the graves that England made.
And now the lion's hide is rent, and
Britain calls for aid,
Remember fellow countrymen,
The role that England played.

The news had hardly reached the
North of gallant Sumpter's fall
When German boys, by thousands,
rallied to freedom's call;
There was no doubting of their faith,
no question of their stand,
This nation surely owes a debt, to
these mens fatherland.
While Englishmen filled treason's
ranks, the German sought the Eagle,
They were no Teuton Tories then,
They fought "mit" Schurz and
Sigel.
And now, at last, the time has come
when this debt can be paid,
Remember, fellow countrymen,
The role the Germans played.

Louis B. Cone,
Fond du Lac, Wis.